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Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

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Organizational matters

Report on the second regular session of 2015, 15 and 16 September 2015

I. Organizational matters

1. The second regular session of 2015 of the Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) was held at United Nations Headquarters on 15 and 16 September 2015.

2. The Executive Board adopted the annotated provisional agenda and workplan for the second regular session (UNW/2015/L.4/Rev.1) and approved the report on its annual session (UNW/2015/7), held from 30 June to 2 July 2015. The Executive Board also approved the proposed provisional agenda and workplan for the first regular session of 2016, to be held on 9 February 2016 (see annex), and discussed the draft annual workplan for 2016, in preparation for its adoption at the first regular session of 2016.

3. The Executive Board adopted two decisions: decision 2015/5, on the structured dialogue on financing, and decision 2015/6, on the integrated budget for the biennium 2016-2017, as contained in the compilation of decisions adopted by the Executive Board in 2015 (UNW/2015/11).

II. Opening statements

4. In his opening statement, the President of the Executive Board noted that 2015 was a particularly significant year for UN-Women, as the Entity was positioned at the centre of the new development agenda for the next 15 years. In addition to the 2030 agenda for sustainable development, which was to be adopted shortly, 2015 marked the twentieth anniversary review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action; the Third International Conference on Financing for Development; the review of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000); and the upcoming twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. He referred to those processes as having fundamental

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and transformative consequences for gender equality and women's empowerment, rights and participation within society.

5. The President of the Board commended the management and staff of UN-Women for their work in all of those processes and welcomed their contribution towards ensuring the recognition of women's rights and gender equality as essential to achieving sustainable development.

6. He stated that the United Nations would embark on the implementation of the commitments made by Heads of State and Government at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit opening on 25 September 2015. He mentioned the upcoming Global Leaders' Meeting on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, to be held on 27 September, co-hosted by the Government of China together with the Governments of Denmark, Kenya and Mexico, noting that it would be an occasion for UN-Women to celebrate achievements and highlight the work ahead.

7. Speaking in his national capacity, the President stated that the Government of Denmark had high expectations of UN-Women. The Entity, in delivering on its mandate, would be a role model in the implementation of the sustainable development goals and its contribution to the "Delivering as one" approach.

8. The President expressed the view that discussions under the current session's agenda item on financing should seek to clarify what would be possible achievements for the Entity versus the true cost of not attaining the required funding targets. He urged Member States and UN-Women to maintain an interactive, transparent and participatory dialogue on the financing of the UN-Women strategic plan.

9. He commended UN-Women for strengthening its strategic focus through the upcoming launch of the flagship programme initiatives that would seek to make UN-Women more fit for purpose. The flagship programmes would be aligned with the strategic plan and with the 2030 agenda for sustainable development. The President looked forward to learning more about that programming initiative in subsequent sessions of the Executive Board.

10. The Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN-Women thanked the President and the Bureau for their continuous commitment. She appreciated the President's innovative approaches throughout the year, which contributed to more interactive engagement and discussions between UN-Women and the Executive Board.

11. Referring to the current migrant and refugee crisis in Europe, she noted that it would likely have chronic and long-term consequences and a huge impact on the future work of the Entity. To put the crisis in perspective, she stated that the United Nations was currently calling for humanitarian assistance and protection for more than 80 million women, men and children. She applauded Governments supportive of the plea of the asylum seekers, reiterating that women, including adolescent girls, were in need of international assistance.

12. Turning to the 2030 agenda for sustainable development, she thanked Member States for their work throughout the various processes, starting with the efforts of the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on the Sustainable Development Goals and leading to the finalization of the goals. She thanked civil society

organizations for their engagement and contributions, emphasizing that the 2030 agenda required UN-Women to be fully prepared to deliver on its mandate.

13. Regarding the reviews conducted for the twentieth anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action by 167 Member States and regional commissions, and the commentary by civil society, she underscored that they illustrated the achievements that had been made, the areas where progress had been slow and the areas of regression. They reinforced the findings that there can be no lasting progress without gender equality and women's empowerment. Collectively, that evidence had shaped the way forward and vastly informed the new development agenda.

14. She emphasized the significance of draft sustainable development goal 5, which addressed the fundamental barriers to gender equality and the empowerment of women, stating that it provided a platform for transformative initiatives.

15. The Head of the Entity cautioned, however, that the level of rhetoric for gender equality, and the level of ambition expressed, were not matched in financial resources. She thanked Member States for their support and urged them to invest in ways that would change the world. She pointed to the funding position of the Entity, which remained unsatisfactory, stressing the need to treat women's rights and the empowerment of women as central to the business of the United Nations.

16. In concluding, the Head of the Entity mentioned the historic Global Leaders' Meeting on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, to be held on 27 September, and called upon Heads of Government to make tangible commitments that would make it possible to reach the goals of the "Planet 50-50 by 2030: step it up for gender equality" initiative.

III. Integrated budget estimates for the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women for the biennium 2016-2017

17. The integrated budget estimates for the biennium 2016-2017 and the response by management to the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions were presented to the Executive Board.

18. The integrated budget set out the total voluntary resources needed by UN-Women to achieve results, as identified in the integrated results framework, which should be considered in conjunction with the approved strategic plan for the period 2014-2017. The current projections for a biennial integrated budget include $880 million in voluntary contributions, with a request for $196.4 million (gross) to be appropriated for the institutional budget. The main focus in the budget for the biennium 2014-2015 is to strengthen the base structure of field offices that have not previously received institutional budget funding.

19. Responding to opening statements and the presentation on the integrated budget, several delegations thanked the President for his effective and efficient stewardship of the Executive Board throughout the year. They thanked the Head of UN-Women for her comprehensive statement and strong leadership, reaffirmed their commitment to the Entity and expressed appreciation for the work of its management and staff.

20. Speakers highlighted their national initiatives and underscored their high-priority areas, including the economic empowerment of women; women and peace and security; putting an end to such human rights violations as female genital mutilation and cutting; ending violence against women; and women with disabilities. One delegation stated that about 80 per cent of the 1 billion persons with disabilities lived in developing countries and were more likely to experience extreme poverty, owing mainly to the multiple forms of discrimination to which they were often subjected. Addressing their specific needs was therefore imperative for a holistic implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the attainment of the sustainable development goals beyond 2015. In that regard, the delegation requested UN-Women to pay increased attention to this matter and establish targeted programmes for women with disabilities.

21. One delegation commended UN-Women for its efforts towards ending gender-based violence and underlined the importance of addressing the particular issue of violence against indigenous women and girls, as well as those targeted because of their sexual orientation and gender identity. In addition, the speaker expressed strong support for the work of the Entity on women's political participation, humanitarian action and sexual reproductive health and rights.

22. One delegation opined that the level of advancement of women and adolescent girls would depend on the success of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development in such areas as gender equality, education, decent jobs, social justice and human dignity. The delegation urged the Entity to play a leading role in the thematic review of the 2030 agenda within the framework of the high-level political forum on sustainable development.

23. The delegation of Japan spoke of the second World Assembly for Women, held recently in Tokyo, and expressed appreciation for the participation and contribution of the Head of UN-Women. Mention was made of the opening ceremony for the UN-Women-Japan liaison office in Tokyo, held on 30 August 2015. The delegation welcomed that initiative, thanked the Head of UN-Women for her presence and stated that it looked forward to continued close collaboration.

24. The delegation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland announced that the country's Secretary of State for International Development would co-host, together with the Executive Director of UN-Women, an event on 25 September on women's economic empowerment, on the margins of the General Assembly's general debate. Governments, civil society and the private sector would be called upon to take action to transform economies by ensuring better economic opportunities for girls and women around the world.

25. One delegation acknowledged that the integrated budget constituted the financial plan of UN-Women and would allow the Entity to have the financial and institutional capacity to achieve the results set out in its approved strategic plan for the period 2014-2017. It was expected that, through the implementation of the integrated budget, UN-Women would enhance efficiency, transparency and accountability by improving and embracing a results-based management approach, as envisaged in the document. The speaker noted with satisfaction that the budget maintained the focus on strengthening the base structure of field offices.

26. One delegation cautioned that the Entity should avoid taking a one-size-fits-all approach and continue to adhere to the principle of national ownership in the implementation of country programmes.

27. One Member State emphasized the importance of ensuring that human resources offices were equipped with the professional tools necessary to effectively implement the strategic plan and that they would be in a position to translate it into concrete action towards gender equality and women's empowerment under the new 2030 agenda for sustainable development. The speaker appreciated the continuing trend of increasing the allocation of financial resources for country-level programme activities, which at the time accounted for 84 per cent of the budget.

28. Some delegations urged UN-Women to continue to enhance its focus on widening and deepening its partnership base towards increasing resources to fully implement the strategic plan for the period 2014-2017.

29. In thanking Member States for their statements, the Head of the Entity expressed appreciation to the Government of Switzerland for its announcement of a 25 per cent multi-year increase in its contribution to the regular voluntary resources of UN-Women and to the United Kingdom for its renewed support to the work of the Entity in the area of women's economic empowerment. Specifically, she thanked all speakers for their acknowledgement of the need for a substantial increase in funding to the Entity. The Head of UN-Women took the opportunity to introduce the Director of Programmes and the Director of Policy.

IV. Evaluation

A. Meta-analysis of evaluations managed by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women in 2014

30. The Director of the UN-Women Independent Evaluation Office provided an overview of the meta-analysis that the Office undertook on an annual basis to ensure that the body of evidence produced by corporate and decentralized evaluations are synthesized and used to inform corporate-level and decentralized policies and strategies.

31. The most recent meta-analysis had been the second one since the adoption of the current strategic plan. To serve the dual purpose of evaluation, annual meta-analyses alternated between a focus on accountability and learning. The focus in 2015 had been on learning, and in 2014 on accountability.

32. Evidence from a total of 21 evaluations completed in 2014 had been included in the analysis. Additional evidence had been drawn from 23 evaluations completed in 2013. All reports included met the standards of quality of the United Nations Evaluation Group.

33. The approach taken had been that of a realist synthesis, which was a structured analysis distilling all relevant existing evidence. Based on 1,135 coded pieces of evidence, the meta-analysis identified 17 core insights.

34. The meta-analysis had shown that while normative and macro-level work could be particularly relevant, building links between the micro, meso and macro levels was essential to increase relevance. Furthermore, the analysis had shown that

the work of UN-Women had been particularly effective when it had focused on the strategic scope of interventions with a holistic understanding of the context.

35. Regarding effectiveness, the meta-analysis had shown that achieving gender equality required long-term investment and flexible programming. Short-term interventions were found to be less effective, in addition to facing practical challenges in terms of delays to funding disbursement and implementation. Furthermore, gender equality programmes had been found to be more effective when they were better at avoiding negative unintended outcomes and included explicit strategies to engage men as champions of women's empowerment.

36. Building on the 17 insights, the meta-analysis set out four conclusions:

(a) Relevance.

The continuing relevance of UN-Women was grounded in its ability to maintain multidisciplinary and integrated approaches, with a particular focus on the macro level, while ensuring linkages between the micro, meso and macro levels.

(b) Effectiveness.

The flexibility of UN-Women was a comparative advantage for long-term strategic interventions. Achieving gender equality, including through a shift in sociocultural attitudes, was a long-term objective. Initiatives would most likely succeed when there were long-term, pragmatic and flexible approaches to programming.

(c) Efficiency.

Significant investments in programming and knowledge management that cut across thematic boundaries facilitated a common shared vision among stakeholders and therefore efficient implementation.

(d) Sustainability.

Striving to continually enhance the active and meaningful participation of stakeholders in interventions was at the root of the Entity's chances for sustainability.

B. Evaluation of the Entity's normative support work and its linkages to operational activities

37. The evaluation of the Entity's normative support work was the fruit of an effective collaboration between the UN-Women Independent Evaluation Office and the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) of the United Nations Secretariat. In 2014, UN-Women was identified by the Committee for Programme and Coordination of the General Assembly for consideration at its fifty-fifth session. The Office of Internal Oversight Services selected normative work as the topic for the evaluation of UN-Women. However, the UN-Women corporate evaluation plan already included an evaluation of normative work.

38. Rather than conducting two evaluations, a decision was made to undertake one evaluation in a collaborative manner: OIOS would conduct the evaluation and the UN-Women Independent Evaluation Office would provide strategic advice and facilitate engagement with stakeholders. This increased efficiency by reducing the

transaction costs to UN-Women while amplifying the evaluation's impact and use. The evaluation was presented to the Committee for Programme and Coordination in June 2015 and was expected to be endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly later in the year.

39. The evaluation found that the level of voluntary contributions received by UN-Women, on which it depends heavily to deliver its mandate, had been significantly lower than original estimates. However, UN-Women had enhanced the visibility of gender equality and increased opportunities for the integration of gender equality into Member States' deliberations and the work of the United Nations system.

40. It was noted that UN-Women achieved positive results in strengthening the normative framework on gender equality by supporting the adoption of gender-specific norms and standards and promoting the integration of gender equality into global and sectoral agendas. For example, UN-Women substantially contributed to the inclusion of a stand-alone goal on gender equality in the proposed sustainable development goals and the mainstreaming of gender equality in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

41. At the national level, the normative advisory support to Governments provided by UN-Women included (a) ensuring that international commitments, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the agreed conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women, were reflected in national development agendas; (b) promoting legal frameworks aligned with these commitments; and (c) supporting Governments and civil society organizations in monitoring and implementation.

42. Four years after its creation, UN-Women stood at a critical juncture in terms of having an even greater impact on the lives of women. Since 2011, it had made significant progress in advancing the global normative agenda for women's rights.

43. UN-Women should capitalize on the progress made in its normative support work and transform that progress into more tangible results on the ground. In moving forward, it was important to acknowledge the challenges faced, including limited resources and competing demands. If UN-Women was to make a difference, it should focus strategically on critical issues that could have a significant impact and seek to benefit from greater synergies between its normative and operational work.

C. Review of corporate gender equality evaluations in the United Nations system

44. The review of corporate gender equality evaluations in the United Nations system was the second and last such review on mainstreaming gender equality. It assessed lessons learned in mainstreaming gender equality in the United Nations system.

45. The review acknowledged the important progress in gender mainstreaming by United Nations entities, led mainly by the introduction of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, which was not reflected in these insights. The technical notes, annual reports and other documents under the Action Plan provided many good examples and reported much progress. However, they had not yet been validated by external and independent evaluations.

46. The review's conclusions related to accountability, results-based management, oversight, human and financial resources, capacity development, and coherence, knowledge and information management. It was found that different methods and approaches should be developed to address the specific challenges to gender mainstreaming in humanitarian settings. The review revealed an overall lower performance in terms of gender mainstreaming within humanitarian settings. That was attributed partly to the fast-paced nature of the work. However, attention to gender equality issues within humanitarian operations was clearly essential, given the additional issues related to security, protection and discrimination.

47. In conclusion, although the review was based on evaluations that predated the period covered by the Action Plan, it validated the current understanding about mainstreaming gender equality or generated insights that would be useful for the United Nations system as a whole, Action Plan reporting entities, UN-Women and the United Nations Evaluation Group.

48. The review provided evidence of both good practices in gender mainstreaming and challenges that was meant to inform further discussion and the development of new guidance and tools, as well as catalyse further actions to improve system-wide gender mainstreaming. They also largely validated the Action Plan's performance indicators, which successfully targeted the key gaps and challenges in gender mainstreaming.

49. As the recent Action Plan reporting had shown further progress in many areas, that momentum needed to be maintained, even increased, to raise the bar for gender mainstreaming in the United Nations system. The Deputy Executive Directors delivered the management response to each evaluation.

50. In a joint statement, several Member States, commended the review of the corporate gender equality in the United Nations system, stating that it set the baseline of gender mainstreaming before the implementation of the Action Plan. They stressed the need for the insights and conclusions to be shared and discussed among all United Nations entities.

51. Further comments included the ideas that gender equality policies should be further grounded and contextualized within United Nations entities' mandates and strategic planning documents, at both the corporate and country levels, in order to increase relevance and effective implementation.

52. In addition, there were specific challenges in relation to gender mainstreaming in humanitarian settings, given the increased vulnerabilities of women and girls with respect to security, protection and discrimination.

53. Finally, in order to strengthen staff accountability for integrating a gender perspective into their work, performance reviews should integrate a gender-related indicator. Gender parity at all levels should be further promoted by addressing barriers, which were already largely identified.

54. Delegations highlighted their concern regarding the risks related to the proliferation of new tools and recommended that the focus in this regard be on implementation.

55. With respect to the meta-analysis of evaluations, some lessons learned were expected to be already incorporated into project design and implementation, including

with respect to national ownership, country-level analysis, capacity assessment and development.

56. Member States underscored four key lessons learned that should be taken into consideration in current work:

(a) UN-Women had proven to be more relevant and effective when focusing the scope of its programmes;

(b) Joint programmes needed to be developed on the basis of current lessons learned, to manage expectations in terms of time frame, management and funding structure;

(c) Multi-stakeholder platforms for locally driven initiatives were essential to sustainability;

(d) Reaching the excluded required bottom-up approaches, in particular through the use of small grant mechanisms that benefit community-based organizations capable of reaching marginalized women. The inclusion of marginalized women and girls should be further addressed through the UN-Women Fund for Gender Equality.

57. Delegations highlighted the issue of funds management and disbursement approval and requested UN-Women management to strike an appropriate balance between fiduciary risks mitigation and financial procedures accessible to implementing partners.

58. They welcomed the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services that examined the relevance and effectiveness of UN-Women in achieving its mandate by linking its normative support work with operational activities. Member States strongly encouraged UN-Women to further link operations at the regional and country levels and related lessons learned with policy dialogue at the global level.

59. To implement its mandate, staff would require clarification on the operationalization of the coordination mandate. The System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women was therefore a key tool. One of the main conclusions cited was that UN-Women enhanced the visibility of and attention to gender equality and the empowerment of women through its normative work, particularly at the global level.

V. Structured dialogue on financing

60. The introduction of this agenda item by the Deputy Executive Director included a financial outlook and elements of the Entity's resource mobilization strategy. Some of the points made are set out below.

61. In spite of financial and economic hardships affecting many Member States, 2014 was a record year for resource mobilization, with a total of $330 million ($164 million in core resources and $159 million in non-core) mobilized. UN-Women was extremely grateful for Member States' support in widening its resource base. A total of 143 Governments had contributed to UN-Women core resources in 2014, of which 26 countries were new donors and 39 had contributed in the multi-year format.

62. UN-Women would continue work towards deepening the contributions from the world's largest economies (the Group of Seven and the Group of 20) and

expanding contributions from emerging donors looking beyond traditional donors from the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

63. The Entity was increasingly moving away from transactional donor relationships towards more strategic partnerships whereby a broad range of partners contributed to the overall strategic direction, policies and programmes. That would be made possible through enhanced capacity provided by specialized and dedicated staff tasked with further developing existing and new partnerships.

64. In this vein, UN-Women would soon launch flagship programming initiatives enabling the Entity to enhance its programme footprint and deliver results in a more effective and focused manner. The flagship programming initiatives would be high-impact, scalable programmes. By leveraging the inherent economies of scale associated with operational activities, they would be aimed at consolidating and scaling up programming without increasing the workload of staff. The programmes would build on and supplement the ongoing programming work.

65. That new programming initiative was a tremendous opportunity for Governments to step up their contributions, especially in the light of the fact that Group of Seven countries contributed only 28 per cent of core resources in 2014, while the Group of 20 contributed 63 per cent. The biggest economies of the world should be firmly on board with contributions commensurate to the size of their economies and the importance that they attached to gender equality.

66. It was important to note the synergistic relationship of core and non-core resources. UN-Women had always achieved a good balance between core and non-core funding, maintaining levels of approximately 55 per cent core resources and 45 per cent non-core resources. The Entity continued to strive for the 50/50 split, as non-core programmes could not be effectively implemented without a robust core base.

67. Multi-year commitments continued to be welcome, as they allowed for more stable, sustainable and predictable programming. In order to achieve results on all important issues before the Board, UN-Women would require funding that was predictable and aligned with its mandate and that afforded the Entity the opportunity to focus and further strengthen areas of comparative advantage.

68. Delegations noted their appreciation for the quality of the brief presented on the resource mobilization strategy and of the proposed flagship programming initiative. One delegation noted that the dialogue extended beyond programming and underlined the added value the Entity provided through its expertise, its capacity to influence, its support and its efforts to hold to account the broader United Nations system, Governments and civil society in advancing gender equality and realizing international commitments in this regard.

69. Delegations stated that they looked forward to hearing more on how the flagship programmes would be developed and implemented. They appreciated steps taken by the leadership of UN-Women to sustain and increase core contributions from government donors, emerging donors and the private sector, and to strengthen and diversify current sources of non-core resources on the basis of the flagship programming initiatives and dedicated funding mechanisms. They stressed that resource mobilization should remain a priority issue.

70. It was underscored that resource mobilization should continue to be discussed within the context of the structured financing dialogues, which were a critical element of the Entity's funding strategy. UN-Women was urged to continue this dialogue on funding with Member States to enhance the predictability, flexibility and alignment of resources provided for the implementation of the strategic plan.

71. While delegations commended UN-Women for seeking to deepen and broaden its funding sources and urged it to continue to do so, one delegation noted that the majority of its financial contributions should continue to come from Governments.

72. Another delegation underlined the importance of informing its taxpayers of the work of the Entity in making the case for increased financial contributions. In this vein, they urged UN-Women to improve accountability and transparency with respect to its projects. The speaker also requested that the Entity build its monitoring capacity with a view to ensuring that donor funds were being used in an optimal manner.

73. UN-Women was called upon to further document and publish its success stories to enhance its visibility in the international arena. UN-Women should also build on its positive reputation, bringing trust and cooperative relationships with partners.

74. One Member State opined that it would be useful in future sessions for UN-Women to provide a more detailed analysis of underfunded areas, to explain what more could be done with more funding and to continue to think creatively about alternative funding mechanisms. The delegation also urged UN-Women to encourage the participation of civil society and the private sector in the structured dialogues on financing.

VI. Audit

75. The Director of Management and Administration ad interim presented the management response to the report of the United Nations Board of Auditors for 2014. Some of the points made are set out below.

76. UN-Women continued to work on sustaining, widening and deepening core contributions from current government donors, engaging emerging donors and expanding and deepening contributions from non-traditional donors, including the private sector (including corporations and philanthropic foundations), individual donors and UN-Women national committees to reach the ultimate goal of securing $500 million per year.

77. Actions had been taken to strengthen oversight over the long-outstanding partner advances. Those included the development of a partner training kit to be used by field offices for training implementing partners to ensure that they had a good understanding of the procedures involved in managing, monitoring and reporting on the use of resources.

78. Interventions from the floor following the presentation of this agenda item demonstrated overwhelming satisfaction that the Board of Auditors issued an unqualified audit opinion on the financial statements of UN-Women for the year 2014.

79. Speakers highlighted the fact that, according to the Board of Auditors, UN-Women spent $270.5 million against a total revenue of $332.9 million for the year ended 31 December 2014. In addition, the Auditors did not identify material deficiencies that affected its opinion on the Entity's financial statements. A number of issues were identified, however, that required consideration by management in order to enhance the effectiveness of UN-Women operations. In particular, some of the key findings highlighted by the Auditors were: the non-achievement of the set funding targets; long-outstanding project advances; and a growing trend of provision for impairment of advances to implementing partners. Delegations urged UN-Women to take appropriate steps to address all the gaps, as mentioned in the recommendations of the report, but nevertheless expressed appreciation for the solid progress made so far.

80. It was noted that the adoption of cloud computing by UN-Women in 2014 represented an example of savings that could be obtained simply through innovation that also improved the quality of the output. Cloud computing allowed staff to collaborate smoothly regardless of location and time, through their mobile devices and personal computers. The Entity was urged to continue to harness innovation in the pursuit of the shared goals of empowering women and ending gender inequalities.

VII. Briefings

A. Youth strategy

81. The presentation of the UN-Women youth strategy was led by the Deputy Executive Director of the Intergovernmental Support and Strategic Partnerships Bureau. The main points highlighted are set out below.

82. Youth and young women's empowerment was a priority area for UN-Women, in line with the emphasis of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development on youth empowerment. Empowered young women and young men as partners of gender equality were fundamental to creating a gender-equal world.

83. The development of the strategy included an in-depth analysis of work undertaken by the Entity at the national and regional levels that allowed for a deeper understanding of emerging practices on youth engagement for promoting gender equality in the social, political and economic spheres. To acquire a wide array of perspectives from across the world, a youth task group had been established, with representation by youth focal points at the country, regional and headquarters levels.

84. The mandate for working on youth and gender stemmed from the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the various political declarations made in the Commission on the Status of Women, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 20-year review of its implementation, the twentieth anniversary of the World Programme of Action for Youth, and the sustainable development goals.

85. Extensive efforts were made to incorporate the opinions of field experts and garner greater buy-in for the UN-Women youth and gender equality strategy through a series of consultations with a wide array of partners from civil society, particularly youth and youth-led organizations, private sector organizations working on youth issues and public sector institutions.

86. The Deputy Executive Director called upon Member States to provide UN-Women with feedback and support the implementation of the strategy in all 193 countries. She stated that the revised draft would be shared with the wider United Nations audience through the United Nations Inter-agency Network on Youth Development. It was expected that the strategy would be finalized by the end of 2015, and that resources would be mobilized prior to the official launch early in 2016.

87. Representatives of Member States who took the floor commended UN-Women on the new youth strategy and expressed their support for it, highlighting its significance, particularly within the 2030 agenda for sustainable development. They stressed the importance of a monitoring and evaluation system and the need for the inclusion of young men.

88. Some delegations emphasized that one major challenge for young women was the lack of support for sexual and reproductive health and rights and asked how UN-Women would collaborate with the United Nations Population Fund on this issue. In response, it was clarified that this area was fundamental to the strategy and cut across all areas with respect to leadership, economic empowerment and action to end violence against women through participation and partnerships. The Fund would therefore continue to work on sexual and reproductive health more directly.

B. Operational response at the country level in Nepal

89. Member States were briefed on the operational response of UN-Women in Nepal through a video and a presentation by the Director of Programmes. During the briefing, the Director depicted UN-Women as an emerging actor in disaster risk reduction and response and humanitarian action and outlined the Entity's comparative advantages.

90. The Deputy Permanent Representative of Nepal to the United Nations took the floor and thanked UN-Women, the United Nations development system and the international community for their solidarity with and continuous assistance to Nepal.

91. Delegations called attention to the needs of the most vulnerable, in particular women with disabilities, and expressed interest in receiving more information on the work of UN-Women in this area. They expressed their support for Nepal, commended the Entity for its work and emphasized the importance of its humanitarian mandate while acknowledging the significance of inter-agency coordination.

VIII. Closing of the session

92. Speaking on behalf of the Head of UN-Women, the Deputy Executive Director of the Intergovernmental Support and Strategic Partnerships Bureau thanked the President and the Vice-Presidents of the Executive Board for their leadership and guidance throughout the current session and for the facilitation of the fruitful exchange with the Board.

93. She thanked the President of the Executive Board for serving in that capacity for the past year and for his enthusiasm, strong spirit of innovation and long-standing commitment to gender equality. Member States were also thanked for actively participating during the session and for their words of encouragement, support and guidance as outlined in their statements.

94. The Deputy Executive Director stated that, in less than two weeks, the leaders of the world would gather to formally adopt the 2030 agenda for sustainable development, which would require the collective efforts of everyone. As underscored during the session, the new agenda rightfully placed gender equality at its core. UN-Women would therefore need to be funded for the purpose of delivering on its mandate.

95. The significance of that upcoming event was quite evident during the Board's session, in which many delegations stressed the heightened importance of the gender component in the 2030 agenda for sustainable development and the key role that UN-Women would have to play in supporting Member States in translating commitments into action at the country and regional levels. Delegations highlighted the need for UN-Women to have more predictable and flexible funding in order to achieve the proposed sustainable development goals.

96. The Deputy Executive Director thanked Member States for their interest in the structured financing dialogues and expressed their appreciation to the Government of Sweden in particular for its role in initiating that useful process. She took the opportunity to congratulate the Board on having reached consensus on the decisions on the structured dialogue on financing and the integrated budget for the biennium 2016-2017 and thanked the facilitators for their work.

97. In his closing remarks, the President of the Board expressed his appreciation to the members of the Bureau for their collaboration and to the Member States for their strong commitment. He underscored the significance of the work that went into ensuring that gender equality was integrated within the new development agenda. While there was pressure on the Entity to prioritize programmes in the event of a financial shortfall, Member States should continue to reinforce the message of gender equality and the empowerment of women throughout all areas of development among their constituents, noting, most importantly, its high-yielding investment. He alluded to the value of acquiring operational insight into the agenda of the Board, citing as an example his participation in the joint field visit of the Executive Boards to Jordan earlier in 2015. He had witnessed a clear expression of the United Nations delivering as one and the dedication of UN-Women staff.

98. In concluding the session, he thanked the Executive Board and UN-Women management for their engagement and the Secretary of the Executive Board and his team for their support throughout the year. He stressed the need to maintain strong participation in Board sessions, urging delegations from capitals to attend such sessions.

99. A short informal briefing on the Global Leaders' Meeting on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment convened following the adjournment of the session.

Annex

Proposed provisional agenda and workplan for the first regular session 2016

Provisional agenda

1. Organizational matters.
2. Structured dialogue on financing.
3. Briefing on the implementation of the coordination mandate of UN-Women.
4. Briefing on the operational response at the country level.
5. Field visit.
6. Briefing on the high-level review of implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000).
7. Other matters.

Day	*Time*	*Item*	*Subject*
Tuesday, 9 February 2016	10 a.m.-1 p.m.		Opening of the session • Statements by the President of the Executive Board and the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director
		1	Organizational matters • Adoption of the annotated provisional agenda and workplan of the first regular session of 2016 • Adoption of the report on the second regular session of 2015 (UNW/2015/2)
		2	Structured dialogue on financing • Briefing on financing the UN-Women strategic plan, including its flagship programmes
		3	Briefing on the implementation of the coordination mandate of UN-Women
	3 p.m.-6 p.m.	4	Briefing on the operational response at the country level
		5	Field visit • Report of the joint field visit of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office for Project Services and the Executive Boards of the United Nations Children's Fund, UN-Women and the World Food Programme to Jordan, which took place from 24 April to 2 May 2015

Day	*Time*	*Item*	*Subject*
		6	Briefing on the high-level review of the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000)
		7	Other matters • Adoption of draft decisions
		1	Organizational matters • Approval of the provisional agenda and workplan of the annual session of 2016 • Adoption of the draft annual workplan for 2016
			Closing of the session • Statements by the President of the Executive Board and the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director